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Letters to the Editor

Katina Strauch

Against the Grain, kstrauch@comcast.net

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From Your Guest Editor:


It's hard to believe but this is the eighth year in a row that *ATG* has dedicated our September issue to reference publishing. However, this year we have decided to throw in a new wrinkle. Because databases have become so much a part of reference work, we have expanded our coverage to include their place in reference publishing. In fact, **Fran Wilkinson's** and **Linda Lewis'** annual front page interview poses a number of probing questions to six academic librarians to get their opinions on "the rapidly changing world of reference databases." Topics like selection criteria and who does the selecting as well as current budget allocations, the impact on print collections, and the future of open access all weave their way into the discussion. This issue also finds *Choice's* **Irv Rockwood** following through on his promise of a follow up article to last year's "Reference Publishing: The View from Middletown." In that piece **Irv** talked about the obvious decline in the number of print reference works, the increasing consolidation among publishers and a perceived movement to Web publishing. This time **Irv** offers an update by concentrating the publisher's perspective on

electronic reference publishing. Using data from a *Choice* online survey of reference publishers, he documents a "steady if at times hesitant and uncertain shift to electronic materials." We also have an insightful interview with **George Machovec**, editor of the *The Charleston Advisor*. *TCA* is one of the few journals dedicated to reviewing databases for the library market so **George** sees the industry from a unique vantage point. He sheds light on the current status of database publishing and offers some interesting ideas about the future.

Of course, we have a number of articles that focus on the traditional print part of reference publishing. **Karen Christensen**, co-founder of **Berkshire Publishing** offers a personal recipe for quality in a reference book publishing that stress three main ingredients: vision, validity, and voice. **Karen's** fresh take on quality makes enlightening reading for librarians as well as publishers. You won't want to miss it. **Sylvia K. Miller**, Publishing Director of Reference at **Routledge/Taylor & Francis** offers a publisher's prescription for useful reference book reviews. Having done a few reference book reviews myself, I found **Sylvia's** critique both reassuring and challenging. Readers of reviews will find some valuable tips on what make a good review. Never

one to avoid controversy, **Dave Tyckoson** will jolt a few people with his contention that print and electronic reference works are being replaced by the Web. **Dave** does a source by source count-down of titles once thought essential that he no longer uses at the reference desk. He and his staff are turning to the Web. While **Dave** still sees a future for reference librarians, he is not so sure about reference publishers.

Last, but certainly not least, we offer an article by **Bob Houbeck**, Director of the **Frances Willson Thompson Library** at the **University of Michigan**, Flint. Taking the administrative slant, **Bob** asserts that it is no longer sufficient to build good collections. New accreditation criteria call for linking library materials to student needs and this, **Bob** says, requires increased cooperation among reference, acquisition and collection development librarians. We are being called on to insure that students integrate library resources into their learning experience and not only that, we are being asked to assess their effectiveness. It's a big job and **Bob** feels that it takes everyone from administration on down to make that happen.

We are proud of this issue and have put a lot into it. Provocative interviews coupled with engaging and enlightening articles arguably make this the best reference publishing issue yet. So sit back with your favorite iced beverage and enjoy. 

CALL FOR EDITORS — AGAINST THE GRAIN

Q: Is there a topic or topics that you think ought to be covered in a future issue of *Against the Grain*? Would you like to know more about a particular aspect in our world of acquisition of scholarly material?

A: Guest edit an issue of *ATG*! All that's required is that you a) solicit 4-6 articles from experts on the subject that you are writing about, b) referee those articles with a colleague, c) write an introduction.

Send suggestions, input, acceptance to: <kstrauch@comcast.net>.

Thanks! 

From Your (water-logged) Editor:

I now own waterfront property. My front yard is a lake. It has been raining in Charleston non-stop since the first of August. This means that I had lots of time at home inside the house to play with my computer, clean up my house, and avoid hurricanes and power outages. Fun and games.

This issue of *Against the Grain* is full! We have all the fabulous feature articles our guest editor, **Tom Gilson**, talks about above plus more special reports on **Acquisitions** and **ILL** guest edited by **Michelle Flinchbaugh** and **Robin Moskal**. Interviews include **Jim Stephens** and **George Machovec** with profiles as well from

four of our special report authors. **Stephanie Kobezak** discusses "Preservations Woes" while **Anthony Ferguson** talks about "Patriotism." And there's much more I don't have room to mention, so read on and enjoy!

Well, I hear there is a tornado watch in the area so I have to shut off my computer and take refuge in the bathtub or in a ditch. Can't remember which. This weather will be better in November! See you at the Conference.

Yr. Ed. 



AGAINST THE GRAIN DEADLINES VOLUME 15 & 16 — 2003-2004

2004 Events	Issue	Ad Reservation	Camera-Ready
Charleston Conference	November 2004	09/08/04	09/29/04
ALA Midwinter	Dec. 04/Jan. 05	11/03/04	11/24/04
2005 Events	Issue	Ad Reservation	Camera-Ready
Annual Report, PLA	February 2005	01/05/05	01/19/05
ARLIS	April 2005	02/23/05	03/09/05
ALA Annual	June 2005	04/27/05	05/11/05
Reference Publishing	September 2005	07/27/05	08/10/05
Charleston Conference	November 2005	09/21/05	10/05/05
ALA Midwinter	Dec. 05/Jan. 06	11/23/05	12/07/05

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

Edna Laughrey, Ads Manager. Address: 291 Tower Drive, Saline, MI 48176; Internet: elaughrey@aol.com; Phone: 734-429-1029; Fax: 734-429-1711.

Letter to the Editor

Send letters to <kstrauch@comcast.net>, phone or fax 843-723-3536, or snail mail: *Against the Grain*, MSC 98, The Citadel, Charleston, SC 29409. You can also send a letter to the editor from the *ATG* Homepage at <http://www.against-the-grain.com>.

Dear Editor :

Thank you for making this conference happen. It has been the single greatest asset for me in learning and keeping up with things I have needed to keep working on in this field.

Jill Carraway

(Collection Development Librarian,
Wake Forest University)
<jill@wfu.edu> 

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